WILLIAM MORRIS BOOK

BY ELBERT HUBBARD

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THIS THEN IS A

WILLIAM MORRIS BOOK

BEING A LITTLE JOURNEY BY *ELBERT HUBBARD*, & SOME LETTERS, HERETOFORE UNPUBLISHED, WRITTEN TO HIS FRIEND & FELLOW WORKER, ROBERT THOMSON, ALL THROWING A SIDE-LIGHT, MORE OR LESS, ON THE MAN AND HIS TIMES

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By Elbert Hubbard

WILLIAM MORRIS BOOK

THE parents of William Morris were well-to-do people who lived in the village of Wathamstow, Essex ❧ The father was a London bill broker, cool-headed, calculating & intensely practical. In the home of his parents William Morris received small impulse in the direction of art; he, however, was taught how to make both ends meet, and there were drilled into his character many good lessons of plain common sense—a rather unusual equipment for a poet, but still one that should not be waved nor considered lightly. At the village school William was neither precocious nor dull, neither black nor white: his cosmos being simply a sort of slatey-gray, which attracted no special attention from schoolfellows or tutors ❧ From the village school he went to Marlborough Academy, where he fitted himself for Exeter College, Oxford, by patient grubbing.

Morris the elder, proved his good sense by taking no very special interest in the boy's education:—violence of direction in education falls flat: man is a lonely creature, and has to work out his career in his own way. To help the grub spin its cocoon is quite unnecessary, and to play the part of Mrs. Gamp with the butterfly in its chrysalis stage is to place a quietus upon its career. The whole science of modern education is calculated to turn out a good, fairish, commonplace article; but the formula for a genius remains a secret with Deity. The great man becomes great in spite of teachers and parents; and his near kinsmen, being color-blind, usually pooh-pooh the idea that he is anything more than mediocre.

At Oxford, William Morris fell in with a young man of about his own age by the name of Edward Burne-Jones ❧ Burne-Jones was studying theology. He was slender in stature, dreamy, spiritual, poetic. Morris was

a giant in strength, blunt in speech, bold in manner, and had a shock of hair like a lion's mane.

This was in the year 1853—these young men being nineteen years of age ❧ The slender, yellow, dreamy student of theology and the ruddy athlete became fast friends ❧ ❧

"Send your sons to college and the boys will educate them," said Emerson. These boys read poetry together; and it seems the first author that specially attracted them was Mrs. Browning; and she attracted them simply because she had recently eloped with the man she loved. This fact proved to Morris that she was a worthy woman and a discerning. She had the courage of his convictions. To elope with a poor poet, leaving a rich father and a luxurious home—what nobler ambition? Burne-Jones, student of theology, considered her action proof of depravity. Morris, in order to show his friend that Mrs. Browning was really a rare and gentle

soul, read aloud to Burne-Jones from her books. In fact, Morris himself had never read much of Mrs. Browning's work, but in championing her cause and interesting his friend in her, he grew interested himself. Like lawyers, we champion a cause first and look for proof later.

In teaching another, Morris taught himself ⁂ By explaining a theme it becomes luminous to us.

In passing, it is well to note that this impulse in the heart of William Morris to come to the defense of an accused person was ever very strong. His defense of Mrs. Browning led straight to "The Defense of Guinevere," begun while at Oxford and printed in book form in his twenty-fourth year. Not that the offenses of Guinevere and Elizabeth Barrett were parallel, but Morris was by nature a defender of women. And it should further be noted that Alfred Tennyson had not yet written "Idylls of the King," at the time Morris wrote

his poetic brief. ¶ Another author that these young men took up at this time was Ruskin. John Ruskin was fifteen years older than Morris—an Oxford man, too,—also the son of a merchant and rich by inheritance ⁂ Ruskin's natural independence, his ability for original thinking and his action in embracing the cause of Turner, the ridiculed, won the heart of Morris. In Ruskin he found a writer who expressed the thoughts that he believed. He read Ruskin, and insisted that Burne-Jones should ⁂ Together they read "The Nature of Gothic," and then they went out upon the streets of Oxford and studied examples at first hand. They compared the old with the new and came to the conclusion that the buildings erected two centuries before had various points to recommend them which modern buildings had not. The modern buildings were being built by contractors, while the old ones were constructed by men who had all the

time there was, and so they worked out their conceptions of the eternal fitness of things

So these young men, with several others, drew up a remonstrance against "the desecration by officious restoration, and the tearing down of time-mellowed structures to make room for unsightly brick piles of boarding-house keepers."

¶ The remonstrance was sent in to the authorities, and by them duly pigeon-holed, but with a passing remark that young fellows sent to Oxford to be educated had better attend to their books and mind their own business.

¶ Having espoused the cause of the Middle Ages in architecture, these young men began to study the history of the people who lived in the olden time. They read Spenser and Chaucer, and chance threw in their way a dog-eared copy of Malory's "Morte D'Arthur," and this was still more dog-eared when they were through with it. Probably no book ever made

more of an impression on Morris than this one; and if he had written an article for the *Ladies' Home Journal* on "Books that Influenced Me Most," he would have placed Malory's "Morte D'Arthur," first.

The influence of Burne-Jones on Morris was marked, and the influence of Morris on Burne-Jones was profound. Morris discovered himself in explaining things to Burne-Jones, and Burne-Jones, without knowing it, adopted the opinions of Morris; and it was owing to Morris that he gave up theology.

Having abandoned the object that led him to college, Burne-Jones lost faith in Oxford, and went down to London to study art.

Morris hung on, secured his B. A., and articled himself to a local architect with the firm intent of stopping the insane drift for modern mediocrity, and bringing about a just regard for the stately dignity of the Gothic.

A few months' experience, however, and he discovered that an apprentice to an architect was not expected to furnish plans nor even criticise those already made: his business was to make detailed drawings from completed designs for the contractors to work from. ¶ A year at architecture, with odd hours filled in at poetry and art, and news came from Burne-Jones that he had painted a picture, and sold it for ten pounds.

Now Morris had all the money he needed. His father's prosperity was at flood, and he had but to hint for funds and they came, yet to make things with your own hands and sell them, was the true test of success. He had written "Gertha's Lovers," "The Tale of the Hollow Land," and various poems and essays for the college magazines; and his book, "The Defense of Guinevere," had been issued at his own expense, and the edition was on his hands—a weary

weight. ¶ Thoreau wrote to his friends, when the house burned and destroyed all copies of his first book, "The edition is exhausted," but no such happiness came to Morris. And so when glad tidings of an artistic success came from Burne-Jones, he resolved to follow the lead and abandon architecture for a pure art.

Arriving in London he placed himself under the tutorship of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, a poet, dreamer and artist six years his senior, whom he had known for some time, and who had also instructed Burne-Jones.

While taking lessons in painting at the rather shabby house of Rossetti in Portland Street, he was introduced to Rossetti's favorite model—a young woman of rare grace and beauty ❧ Rossetti had painted her picture as "The Blessed Damozel," leaning over the bar of Heaven, while the stars in her hair were seven ❧ Morris, the impressionable, fell in love with the

canvas and then the woman. ¶ When they were married, tradition has it, that Rossetti withheld his blessing & sought to drown his sorrow in fomentations, with dark, dank hints in baritone to the effect that the Thames only could appreciate his grief.

But grief is transient; and for many years Rossetti & Burne-Jones pictured the tall, willowy figure of Mrs. Morris as the dream-woman, on tapestry and canvas; and as the "Blessed Virgin," her beautiful face and form are shown in many sacred places.

Truth need not be distorted in a frantic attempt to make this an ideal marriage —only a woman with the intellect of Minerva could have filled the restless heart of William Morris. But the wife of Morris believed in her lord, and never sought to hamper him, and if she failed at times to comprehend his genius, it was only because she was human. Possibly she could not throw her net over a sublime idea, but surely

she was not a vampire. Whistler once remarked that without Mrs. Morris to supply stained glass attitudes and the lissome beauty of an angel, the Pre-Raphaelites would have long since gone down to dust and forgetfulness ❧ ❧

THE year William Morris spent at architecture, he considered as nearly a waste of time, but it was not so in fact. As a draughtsman he had developed a marvelous skill, and the grace and sureness of his lines were a delight to Burne-Jones, Rossetti, Holman Hunt, Ford Madox Brown and others of the little artistic circle in which he found himself.

Youth lays great plans; youth is always in revolt against the present order; youth groups itself in bands and swears eternal fealty; and life, which is change, dissipates the plans, subdues the revolt into conformity, and the sworn friendships fade away into dull indifference.

Always? Well, no, not exactly. In this instance the plans and dreams found form; the revolt was a revolution that succeeded; and the brotherhood existed for near fifty years & then was severed only by death.

Without going into a history of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, it will be noted that the band of enthusiasts in art, literature and architecture had been swung by the arguments and personality of William Morris into the strong current of his own belief, and this was that Art & Life in the Middle Ages were much lovlier things than they are now.

That being so, we should go back to medieval times for our patterns. A study of the best household decoration of the Fifteenth Century showed that all the furniture used then was made to fit a certain apartment, and with a definite purpose in view ❀ Of course it was made by hand, and the loving marks of the tool were upon it. It was

made as good, strong and durable as it could be made. Floors and walls were of mosaic or polished wood, and these were partially covered by beautifully woven rugs, skins and tapestries. The ceilings were sometimes ornamented with pictures painted in harmony with the use for which the room was designed ❧ Certainly there were no chromos, and the pictures were few and these of the best, for the age was essentially a critical one.

A modest circular was issued in which the fact was made known that, "A company of historical artists will use their talents in home decoration." ❧ ¶ Dealers into whose hands this circular fell, smiled in derision, and the announcement made no splash in England's artistic waters ❧ But the leaven was at work which was bound to work a revolution in the tastes of fifty million people.

Most of our best moves are accidents, and every good thing begins as some-

thing else ❧ In the beginning there was no expectation of building up a trade or making a financial success of the business. The idea was simply that these eight young men who composed the band were to use their influence in helping each other to secure commissions, and corroborate the views of doubting patrons as to what was art and what not ❧ In other words, they were to stand by each other ❧ Ford Madox Brown, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Burne-Jones and Arthur Hughes were painters; Philip Webb an architect; Peter Paul Marshall a landscape gardener and engineer; Charles Joseph Faulkner, an Oxford don, a designer, and William Morris was an all 'round artist—ready to turn his hand to anything ❧ ❧

These men undertook to furnish a home from garret to cellar in an artistic way. ¶ Work came and each set himself to help all the others ❧ From simply supplying designs for furniture, rugs,

carpets and wall paper they began to manufacture these things, simply because they could not buy or get others to make the things they desired. ¶ Morris undertook the entire executive charge of affairs, and mastered the details of half a dozen trades in order that he might intelligently conduct the business.

The one motto of the firm was, "Not how cheap, but how good." ❧ They insisted that housekeeping must be simplified, and that we should have fewer things and have them better. To this end single pieces of furniture were made and all sets of furniture discarded ❧ I have seen several houses furnished entire by William Morris, and the first thing that impressed me was the sparsity of things. Instead of a dozen pictures in a room there were two or three—one on an easel and one or two on the walls. Gilt frames were abandoned almost entirely and dark stained woods were used instead. Wide

fireplaces were introduced and mantels of solid oak ❧ For upholstery, leather covering was usually used instead of cloth. Carpets were laid in strips, not tacked down to stay, and rugs were laid so as to show a goodly glimpse of hard-wood floor; and in the dining room a large round table was placed instead of a right angle square one. This table was not covered with a table-cloth: mats or doilies being used here and there ❧ To cover a table entire with a cloth or spread, was pretty good proof that the piece of furniture was cheap and shabby; so in no William Morris library or dining room would you find a table entirely covered. The round dining table is in very general use now, but few people realize how its plainness was scouted when William Morris first introduced it ❧ One piece of William Morris furniture has become very popular in America, and that is the "Morris Chair." The first chair of this pattern

was made entirely by the hands of the master. It was built by a man who understood anatomy, unlike most chairs and all church pews. It was also strong, durable, ornamental and by a simple device the back could be adjusted so as to fit a man's every mood. ¶ There has been a sad degeneracy among William Morris chairs; still, good ones can be obtained, nearly as excellent as the one in which I rested at Kelmscott House — broad, deep, massive, upholstered with curled hair, and covered with leather that would delight a bookbinder. Such a chair can be used a generation and then passed on to the heirs.

Furnishing of churches and chapels led naturally to the making of stained glass windows, and hardly a large city of Christendom but has an example of the Morris work

Morris managed to hold that erratic genius, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, in line and direct his efforts, which of itself

was a feat worthy of record. He made a fortune for Rossetti, who was a child in this world's affairs, and he also made a fortune for himself and every man connected with the concern.

Burne-Jones stood by the ship manfully and proved his good sense by never interfering with the master's plans, or asking foolish, quibbling questions,—showing faith on all occasions.

The Morris designs for wall paper, tapestry, cretonnes and carpets are now the property of the world, but to say just which is a William Morris design and which a Burne-Jones is an impossibility, for these strong men worked together as one being with two heads and four hands. At one time, I find the firm of Morris & Company had three thousand hands at work in its various manufactories, and the work in most instances being done by hand, after the manner of the olden time.

William Morris was an avowed socialist long before so many men began to grow

fond of calling themselves Christian Socialists. Morris was too practical not to know that the time is not ripe for life on a communal basis, but in his heart was a high and holy ideal that he has practically explained in his books, "A Dream of John Ball" and "News from Nowhere," and more fully in many lectures. His sympathy was ever with the workingman and those who grind fordone at the wheel of labor. To better the conditions of the toiler was his sincere desire.

There is one criticism that has been constantly brought against Morris, and although he answered this criticism a thousand times during his life, it still springs fresh—put forth by the little men who congratulate themselves on having scored a point.

They ask in orotund, "How could William Morris expect to benefit society at large, when all of the products he manufactured were so high in price that only the rich could buy them?"

WILLIAM MORRIS

Socialism, according to William Morris, does not consider it desirable to supply cheap stuff to anybody. The socialist aims to make every manufactured article of the best quality possible. It is not how cheap can this be made, but how good. Make it as excellent as it can be made to serve its end. Then sell it at a price that affords something more than a bare existence to the workmen who put their lives into its formation In this way you raise the status of the worker—you pay him for his labor and give him an interest and pride in the product Cheap products make cheap men. The first thought of socialism is for the worker who makes the thing, not the man who buys it.

And so I will answer the question of the critics as to how society has been benefited by, say, a William Morris book:

1—The workmen who made it found a pride and satisfaction in their work.

2—They receive a goodly reward in cash for their time and efforts.
3—The buyers were pleased with their purchase, and received a decided satisfaction in its possession.
4—Readers of the book were gratified to see their author clothed in such fitting and harmonious dress.
5—Reading the text has instructed some; and possibly inspired a few to nobler thinking.

After "The Defense of Guinevere" was published, it was thirteen years before Morris issued another volume. His days had been given to art and the work of management. But now the business had gotten on to such a firm basis that he turned the immediate supervision over to others and took two days of the week, Saturday & Sunday, for literature.

Taking up the active work of literature when thirty-seven years of age, he followed it with the zest of youth for twenty years—until death claimed him.

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¶ William Morris thought literature should be the product of the ripened mind—the mind that knows the world of men and which has grappled with earth's problems; and in this he had the corroboration of several philosophers. He also considered that letters should not be a profession in itself—to make a business of an art is to degrade it ❧ Literature should be the spontaneous output of the mind that has known and felt. To work the mine of spirit as a business and sift its product for hire, is to overwork the vein and palm off slag for useful metal. Shakespeare was a theatre manager, Milton a secretary, Bobby Burns a farmer, Lamb a bookkeeper, Wadsworth a government employee, Emerson a lecturer, Hawthorne a custom-house inspector, and Whitman a clerk. William Morris was a workingman and manufacturer, —and would have been Poet Laureate of England had he been willing to call himself a student of sociology instead

of a socialist. Socialism itself (whatever it may be) is not offensive—the word is.

ONCE the great American Apostle of Negation expressed a regret that he had not been consulted when the Universe was being planned, otherwise he would have arranged to make good things catching instead of bad.

The remark tokened a slight lesion in the logic of the Apostle, for good things are now, and ever have been, infectious. Once upon a day, I met a young man who told me that he was exposed at Kelmscott House for a brief hour, and caught it, & ever after there were in his mind, thoughts, feelings, emotions and ideals that were not there before. Possibly the psychologist would explain that the spores of all these things were simply sleeping, awaiting the warmth and sunshine of some peculiar presence to start them into

being, but of that I cannot speak—this only I know, that the young man said to me, "Whereas I was once blind, I now see." ❧ William Morris was a giant in physical strength and a giant in intellect. His nature was intensely masculine in that he could plan and act without thought of precedent. Never was a man more emancipated from the trammels of convention and custom than William Morris.

Kelmscott House at Hammersmith is in an ebb-tide district where once wealth and fashion held sway; but now the vicinity is given over to factories, tenement houses and all that train of evil and vice that follow in the wake of faded gentility.

At Hammersmith you will see spacious old mansions used as warehouses; and others as boarding-houses; still others have been converted into dance halls with beer gardens in the rear, where once bloomed and blossomed milady's flower beds.

The broad stone steps and wide hallways and iron fences, with glimpses now and then of ancient door-plates or more ancient knockers, tell their tale of generations turned to dust ... Just why William Morris, the poet and lover of harmony, should have selected this locality for a home is quite beyond the average ken. Certainly it mystified the fashionable literary world of ... London with whom he never kept goose-step, but which still kept track of him, for fashion has a way of patronizing genius. Some of his old friends wrote him asking where Hammersmith was, and others expressed doubts as to its existence. I had no difficulty in taking the right train for Hammersmith, but once there no one seemed to have ever heard of the Kelmscott Press. When I inquired, grave misgivings seemed to arise as to whether the press referred to was a cider press, a wine press or a press for "cracklings."

Finally I found a man—a workingman

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—whose face beamed at the mention of William Morris. Later I found that if a man knew William Morris, his heart throbbed at the mention of his name, and he at once grew voluble and confidential and friendly. It was the "Open Sesame." And if a person did not know William Morris, he simply did n't, and that was all there was about it.

But the man I met knew "Th' Ole Man," which was the affectionate title used by all the hundreds and thousands who worked with William Morris ❧ And to prove that he knew him, when I asked that he should direct me to the Upper Mall, he simply insisted on going with me. Moreover, he told a needless lie and declared he was on the way there, although when we met he was headed in the other direction. By a devious walk of half a mile we reached the iron fence of Kelmscott House ❧ We arrived amid a florid description of the Icelandic Sagas as told by my

new-found friend and interpreted by Th' Ole Man. My friend had not read the Sagas, but still he recommended them; and so we passed through the wide open gates and up the stone walk to the entrance of Kelmscott House. ¶ On the threshold we met Mr. F. S. Ellis and Mr. Emery Walker, who addressed my companion as "Tom." I knew Mr. Ellis slightly and also had met Mr. Walker, who works Rembrandt miracles with a camera.

Mr. Ellis was deep in seeing the famous "Chaucer" through the press, and Mr. Walker had a print to show, so we turned aside, past a great pile of paper in crates that cluttered the hallway, and entered the library. There, leaning over the long, oaken table, in shirt-sleeves, was the Master ❧ Who could mistake that great shaggy head, the tangled beard, and frank, open-eyed look of boyish animation?

The man was sixty and more, but there was no appearance of age in the eye,

complexion, form or gesture—only the whitened hair! He greeted me as if we always had known each other, and Ellis and piles of Chaucer proof led straight to old Professor Child of Harvard, whose work Ellis criticised and Morris upheld. They fell into a hot argument, which was even continued as we walked across the street to the Doves Bindery. The Doves Bindery, as all good men know, is managed by Mr. Cobden-Sanderson, who married one of the two daughters of Richard Cobden of Corn-Law fame.

Just why Mr. Sanderson, the lawyer, should have borrowed his wife's maiden name and made it legally a part of his own, I do not know. Anyway I quite like the idea of linking one's name with that of the woman he loves, especially when it has been so honored by the possessor as the name of Cobden.

¶ Cobden-Sanderson caught the rage for beauty from Morris, and began to bind books for his own pleasure.

KELMSCOTT HOUSE,
UPPER MALL,
HAMMERSMITH.

Feb 25th
(1886)

Dear Mr. Thompson

I think you did right to pay the fine, as no principle was involved in the matter. I am sorry that I cant write you at length: but these things take up so much of my time. So I must comfort myself by saying that the League always has its coat off. But that we dont

quite agree with these tactics
of the Unemployed agitation
The whole thing smacks too
much of trying to force on
palliatives by parliamentary
measures. & we dont believe
in palliatives or Parliament.

I dont mean to say that
the riots will not do good:
but if they had been more
successful they would have
been disastrous

Excuse great haste

Yours very truly
William Morris

William Morris contended that any man who could bind books as beautifully as Cobden-Sanderson should not waste his time with law. Cobden-Sanderson talked it over with his wife, and she being a most sensible woman agreed with Morris. And so Cobden-Sanderson, acting on suggestion of Th' Ole Man, rented the time-mellowed mansion next door to the old house occupied by the Kelmscott Press and went to work binding books.

When we were once inside of the Bindery, that Chaucerian argument between Mr. Ellis and Th' Ole Man shifted off into a wrangle with Cobden-Sanderson. I could not get the drift of it exactly—it seemed to be the continuation of some former quarrel, about an oak leaf or something Anyway, Th' Ole Man silenced his opponent by smothering his batteries —all of which will be better understood when I explain that Th' Ole Man was large in stature, bluff, bold and strong-

voiced, whereas Cobden-Sanderson is small, red-headed, meek, and wears bicycle trousers.

The argument, however, was not quite so serious an affair as I at first supposed, for it all ended in a laugh and easily ran off into a quiet debate as to the value of Imperial Japan vs. Whatman.

¶ We walked through the various old parlors that now do duty as workrooms for bright-eyed girls, then over through the Kelmscott Press, and from this to another old mansion that had on its door a brass plate so polished and repolished, like a machine-made sonnet too much gone over, that one can scarcely make out its intent. Finally I managed to trace the legend, "The Seasons." I was told it was here that Thomson, the poet, wrote his book. Once back in the library of Kelmscott House, Mr. Ellis and Th' Ole Man leaned over the great oaken table & renewed, in a gentler key, the question as to whether Professor Child was justified in his

construction of the Third Canto of the "Canterbury Tales." Under cover of the smoke I quietly disappeared with Mr. Cockerill, the Secretary, for a better view of the Kelmscott Press.

This was my first interview with William Morris. By chance I met him once again for a few moments, some days after, at the shop of Emery Walker in Clifford Court, Strand. I had been told upon divers occasions by various persons that William Morris had no sympathy for American art and small respect for our literature. I am sure this was not wholly true, for on this occasion he told me that he had read "Huckleberry Finn," and doted on "Uncle Remus." He also spoke with affection and feeling of Walt Whitman, and told me that he had read every printed word that Emerson had written. And further he congratulated me on the success of my book, "Songs from Vagabondia."

FROM the beginning of this century down to comparatively recent times, the housekeeping world seems to have been in thrall to six haircloth chairs, a slippery sofa to match, and a very cold, marble-top center table.

In all the best homes there was also a marble mantel to match the center table; on one end of this mantel was a blue glass vase containing a bouquet of paper roses, and on the other a plaster-Paris cat ❧ Above the mantel hung a wreath of wax flowers in a glass case. In such houses were usually to be seen gaudy-colored carpets, imitation lace curtains, and a what-not in the corner that seemed ready to go into dissolution through the law of gravitation ❧ ❧

Early in the seventies lithograph presses began to create chromos that were warranted just as good as oil paintings, and these were distributed in millions

William Morris
After the painting by Watts

by enterprising newspapers as premiums for subscriptions. Looking over an old file of the *Christian Union* for the year 1871, I chanced upon an editorial wherein it was stated that the end of painting pictures by hand had come, and the writer piously thanked heaven for it—and added, "Art is now within the reach of all." Furniture, carpets, curtains, pictures and books were being manufactured by machinery, and to glue things together and give them a look of gentility and get them into a house before they fell apart, was the seeming desideratum of manufacturers. ¶ The editor of the *Christian Union* surely had a basis of truth for his statement; art had received a sudden chill: palettes and brushes could be bought for half-price, and many artists were making five-year contracts with lithographers. Those too old to learn to draw on lithograph stones saw nothing left for them but to work designs with worsted in perforated cardboard.

¶ To the influence of William Morris does the civilized world owe its salvation from the mad rage and rush for the tawdry and cheap in home decoration. It will not do to say that if William Morris had not called a halt some one else would, nor to cavil by declaring that the inanities of the Plush-Covered-Age followed the Era of the Hair-Cloth Sofa. These things are frankly admitted, but the refreshing fact remains that fully one-half the homes of England and America have been influenced by the good taste and vivid personality of one strong, earnest, courageous man.

William Morris was the strongest all 'round man the century has produced. He was an Artist and Poet in the broadest and best sense of these much bandied terms. William Morris could do more things, and do them well, than any man of either ancient or modern times whom we can name In a magazine article, a short time ago,

I saw Mr. Hopkinson Smith referred to as "the Leonardo da Vinci of America," and the article in question, I do not believe was written by Mr. Smith, himself, either.

Mr. Hopkinson Smith is a talented man, and I surely would not descry his various gifts He is a writer, an artist, an orator and a civil engineer. He is eminently sane, and possesses common sense plus, and always has one eye well fixed on the Main Chance. He is practical Mr. Smith is not a college man, and when in 1894, he gave a course of lectures at Harvard, the throngs that crowded Sander's Theatre to its utmost limit, testified to the fact that of Harvard's three hundred professors and teachers, not one could match this lighthouse builder in point of personality.

However, the Plutarch who writes the parallel lives of Hopkinson Smith and William Morris will place the American at a great disadvantage. William

Morris could do everything that Smith can, even to building an Eddystone Light, and beside this, was master of six trades. He was a weaver, a blacksmith, a wood-carver, a painter, a dyer and a printer. And he was a musical composer of no mean ability.

Better than all, he was an enthusiastic lover of his race: his heart throbbed for humanity, & believing that society could be reformed only from below, he cast his lot with the toilers, dressed as one of them, and in the companionship of workingmen found a response to his holy zeal which the society of an entailed aristocracy denied.

The man who could influence the entire housekeeping of half a world, and give the kingdom of fashion a list to starboard; who could paint beautiful pictures; compose music; speak four languages; write sublime verse; address a public assemblage effectively; produce plays; resurrect the lost art of making books—books such as were

made only in olden times as a loving, religious service; who lived a clean, wholesome, manly life—beloved by those who knew him best —shall we not call him MASTER?

WILLIAM MORRIS

THE TREADWAY

WASHINGTON, D. C.

September 8, 1906

ELBERT HUBBARD,
ROYCROFT INN,
East Aurora, N.Y.

DEAR COMRADE : These Morris letters, heretofore unpublished, I send to you as the man so far as I know in America most likely to appreciate them kindly and most capable of presenting them fitly to such readers as may have hearts to enjoy them. The fact that they were addressed to me while sojourning in London in the years 1884 and 1885, is now of little significance and no general interest. They belong to mankind.

I cordially authorize you to publish these letters in such form, with such "connective tissue" of comment or notation, in such "color scheme" as to you may seem fittest and best. I remain

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT THOMSON

August 25, 1906

MRS. ELBERT HUBBARD,
THE ROYCROFT INN,
East Aurora, N. Y.

COMRADINE: If you will permit this form of address (we need a feminine for comrade, do we not?) I have to thank you again for your last kind note and ask you to thank Comrade Hubbard for me for his good and generous note of the 19th inst. with Membership Card enclosed

I am delighted to think the Morris letters may turn out a little gem of a book from his hands. I hope your own interest in the little production is alive and will continue as from the inception shown.

I am expecting some running comments from the Fra to give life and up-to-date interest in the old letters. A running fire of comment on "Socialism" if only in the way of exquisite banter and not heavy discussion from the Fra's pen would seem to me a great thing to carry the dose of "Socialism" over the American palate. Don't *you* think so, perhaps?

¶ I imagine any comments should explain that Morris' views of "Remedies" became much modified later in life and that he became reconciled to his old colleague Hyndman ten years after their separation, referred to in the

letters. In this connection, I have made a few references to Mackail's book, which may be worth noticing and enclose.

Does not the incident of the rough handling by the mob in Hyde Park give a pretty and pathetic ending to the letters, and by the way, might not a stanza from the beautiful lines, given in the *Little Journey to the Home of Morris*, prettily end the booklet ?

> Dreamer of dreams, born out of my due time
> Why should I strive to set the crooked straight ? etc.

But we must not fetter the artist's hand by any crude suggesting of mine.

I am enclosing a sad little booklet card souvenir of mine which you may care to look at and return to me if you please, together with a newspaper clipping from an old London evening paper, reporting the incident referred to in the autograph letter you have. I had not discovered this clipping when I wrote you before. I also send you a second time the old Membership Card of the Dem. Fed. as I failed to mention that the oak tree decoration on the card was, I recollect, a bit of design by Morris' own hand, and would ask if the design could be used in any way in the Morris letters.

My blessings to you both in your good work.

Yours faithfully,

ROBERT THOMSON

KELMSCOTT HOUSE

UPPER MALL, HAMMERSMITH

June 20, 1884

DEAR SIR : I ask your pardon for not answering your former letter before : I have been very busy which must excuse me. I can easily understand your wish to follow some other business than teaching boys what they don't want to learn : but since you ask my opinion about your chances as to getting employment as a draftsman I am bound to tell you that unless you have very special talents your chances of employment are very slender ; more especially as business is flat at present, and I should think is likely to grow flatter ☙ You see that this is one of the things which we Socialists complain of in the present state of things, that a man having once grown into an occupation he cannot change it, however unfit he may be for it : he is *forced* to stay where he is just as much as if he were chained up like a slave or a dog. ¶ I must decline to argue theological points. I don't understand them : if there be a God, he, or it, is a very different thing from what religionists imagine. ¶ Finally I beg you to do your best to get your livelihood by what you understand ; and to grasp the fact that individualist efforts to break the chains of society *must* fail.

Yours faithfully,

WILLIAM MORRIS

KELMSCOTT HOUSE
UPPER MALL, HAMMERSMITH

July 24, 1884

DEAR MR. THOMSON: I write to you in a hurry, as 'tis my best chance of answering your letter to do so at once. You must understand first that though I have a great respect for Ruskin and his works (besides personal friendship) he is not a Socialist, that is, not a *practical* one. He does not expect to see any general scheme even begun: he mingles with certain sound ideas which he seems to have acquired instinctively, a great deal of mere whims, deduced probably from that early training of which he gives an amusing account: anyhow his idea of national workshops is one which could only be realized in a state (that is a society) already socialized: nor could it ever take effect in the way that he thinks it could. You must n't attach too much importance to what I said about the present Government doing something towards humanizing its own establishments; that together with 'the organization of labour' of our handbill or manifesto are merely transitional remedies for the present poverty ❧ Neither could these two quite incomplete measures be taken unless the State i. e. the people (for the 'Government'

must abdicate its present position of a class government first) unless the State, or people rather, has made up its mind to take over for the good of the community *all the means of production :* i. e *credit,* railways, mines, land, factories, shipping, machinery, which are at present in the hands of private monopolists ; this determination once come to by the people its execution will be easy, and the details of it will clear up one after the other ; and the thing may be done gradually : but any partial scheme *elaborated as a scheme,* which implies the existence with it side by side of the ordinary commercial competition is doomed to fail just as the co-operative scheme is failing : it will be sucked into the tremendous stream of commercial production and vanish into it, after having played its part as a red-herring to spoil the scent of revolution.

I believe (and have always done so) on the other hand that the most important thing to press upon the notice of the people at present is the legal reduction of the working day : every working man can see the immediate advantage to him of this : the Trades Unions *may* be got to take it up ; and I doubt if the Government dare resist a strong cry for it : it is of all our stepping stones at once the most possible to carry within a reasonable time, and the most important : much more important than at first sight appears ; all the more because it would at once become an international affair ☙ I am glad to say that my colleagues

quite agree with me in this view, as do the foreign socialists.
As to the "programme." I suppose you mean the political programme : I should think that this would in all probability be much shortened and simplified But you must remember that though you may make a formula or maxim which carries Socialism with it, and which may be useful to impress our aims on peoples minds, the subject is a difficult and intricate one, and to understand really requires a great deal of reading : I don't mean to say that everybody who joins our ranks must understand it in this way ; but some must and everybody must know something of its elements.
Petitions to Parliament, I must tell you, have long been considered by all parties as very poor instruments of agitation ; although they are used in default of better sometimes : you see the fact is that Parliament is a dying thing.
¶ We will by all means have a mass meeting in Hyde Park, of employed and unemployed, when we can : but it would be a great mistake to be in a hurry with such a demonstration ; a fact which the Liberals may find out even about Mondays if they don't take care : that is if they don't work hard at it now. A great demonstration by us must be nothing but the sign of our having a great and closely-knit *organization* Otherwise even its apparent success would bring about languor & reaction. To make really convinced converts if only

one by one : to show even the most ignorant of the 'poor' that we are on their side, and that we are striving to make them gain a better condition of life for themselves—themselves now living, you understand, not the generations a thousand years to come : to infuse hope into the oppressed in fact—that is our business ; and I don't think it is possible for us to fail in it, in spite of our own mistakes and weaknesses ❧ You see what we Socialists aim at is to remove from people the weight of overwork and anxiety which now crushes them : we know that a condition of poverty has not always meant overwork and anxiety, but under modern civilization it does, and with modern civilization we have to deal : we cannot turn our people back into Catholic English peasants and guild-craftsmen, or into heathen Norse bonders, much as may be said for such conditions of life : we have no choice but to accept the task which the centuries have laid on us of using the corruption of 300 years of profit-mongering for the overthrow of that very corruption : commerce has bred the Proletariat and used it quite blindly, and is still blind to the next move in the game ; which will be that the Proletariat will say : We will be *used* no longer, you have organized us for *our own* use. Again it is our business to make people hope that they can be organized into saying this as if they meant it : in the course of their gathering that hope, it may well be that rough things may befal ; but I

say plainly that I shrink from no consequences of that gathering hope ; for when it begins to realize itself (as it will) there will be an end of overwork and anxiety—and *then* people will find out what kind of education and morals they need and will have them : not unlikely that they may be somewhat different from our preconceptions of them. Meantime to try to settle amidst our present corruption what that education, those morals shall be, except in the most general way seems to me a putting of the cart before the horse.

Summa—Whatever Socialism may lead to, our aim, to be always steadily kept in view, is, to obtain for the whole people, duly organized, the possession and control of all the means of production and exchange, destroying at the same time all national rivalries.

The means whereby this is to be brought about is first, educating the people into desiring it, next organizing them into claiming it effectually. Whatever happens in the course of this education and organization must be accepted cooly and as a necessary incident, and not discussed as a matter of essential principle, even if those incidents should mean ruin and war. I mean that we must not say 'we must drop our purpose rather than carry it across this river of violence.' To say that means casting the whole thing into the hands of chance : and we can't do that ; we *can't* say : If this is the evolution of history, let it evolve itself, we won't help. The evolution will force

us to help ; will breed in us passionate desire for action, which will quench the dread of consequences.

You see you have drawn a long, and I fear rambling letter from me : you had better join us in any case, since you can learn while working with us ; and feeling as strongly as you seem to do will help to keep us straight. I am

Yours faithfully
WILLIAM MORRIS

KELMSCOTT HOUSE
UPPER MALL, HAMMERSMITH

January 1, 1885

DEAR MR. THOMSON: In answer to your note I will first give you the notice of our resignation which was handed in last Saturday: "Since discord has arisen in this council owing to the attempt to substitute arbitrary rule therein for fraternal co-operation contrary to the principles of Socialism, and since it seems to us impossible to heal this discord, we the undersigned think it better in the interests of the cause of Socialism to cease to belong to this council and accordingly hand in our resignations." This was signed by E. Aveling, Eleanor Marx-Aveling, Belfort Bax, Robert Banner, — Cooper, W. J. Clarke, J. Lane, J. L. Mahon, — Mainwaring, William Morris. ¶ The whole thing really lies in this statement: the attempt to establish absolutism led to its usual results and had to be backed by the usual means ☙ But the immediate causes which led to the actual split were two-fold: 1st. It was attempted to expel Mr. W. J. Clarke from the Federation, the charge alleged against him being that he had in conversation with certain members of the Council made

or hinted charges of self-seeking against Mr. Hyndman, and on one or two of his known supporters. ¶ Now it may be admitted that Mr. Clarke had been injudicious in his remarks, but surely expulsion was much too heavy a penalty to inflict on a useful and energetic member of the Federation for the crime of a little incautious talk to *members of the Council* ❧ Moreover, others had notably been guilty of the crime such as it was, probably we all had, more or less: certainly Messrs. Frost, Champion and Hyndman had. In short the attack on Clarke was made because he, like others of us, had objected to Mr. Hyndman's tendencies, and had had the courage to let it be known; while his injudicious way of doing this gave a handle against him ❧ I was quite prepared to vote against Mr. Clarke's expulsion, and if need be to follow him out of the Federation, as I thought he had been treated very unfairly.

The 2nd matter relates to our comrade Scheu, who has been ever since I joined an able, devoted, and trusted member. Briefly the facts are these: Scheu when he left London last summer for Edinburgh set himself vigorously to getting the Branch there, which was very weak, into a good state: for reasons of policy, such as not wishing to alienate the Land-restoration people there, the Branch thought it better to call themselves "The Scottish Land and Labor League, being the Scottish section of the Social-Democratic Federation."

I can easily understand exception being taken to this additional name. But the Branch under that name was accepted as an affiliated body by the Council, and at the annual Conference Scheu represented it, and explained in the open meeting which followed the Conference why they had added to the name of the Branch, and no objection was made to it either by Mr. Hyndman or anybody else ❧ Well, some three or four weeks ago Hyndman gave an address at Glasgow, which resulted in the forming anew a Branch of the S. D. F. in that city: the Edinburgh Branch sent a deputation to the Glasgow one, asking them to join them: the result of their consenting, as of course the Edinburgh people must have known, would certainly have been that ❧ Glasgow would have led as the more important body: however the Glasgow Branch demurred, as they had full right to do, and some of the members seem to have written to Hyndman for *orders* as to what to do. Accordingly when I came to Glasgow about three weeks ago, I found the executive divided, and in fact quarreling: at the meeting I attended a letter from Hyndman was read attacking Scheu in what I am compelled to call a treacherous manner: accusing him of being an anarchist, a friend of Johann Most, and disloyal to the cause of Socialism; in short saying just what the writer thought would injure Scheu the most with the Glasgow people. These charges I knew to be untrue and I saw therefore that

it was no longer any use trying to smother the smouldering discontent in the Federation ❧ I was bound, you see, either to accept Hyndman's charges against Scheu, whom I knew to be trustworthy, or to declare against Hyndman ❧ I did not hesitate ; and in the meeting of last Tuesday fortnight, at which the motion for Clarke's expulsion was thrown out, I plainly expressed my opinion as to Hyndman's absolutism and self-seeking ❧ I need go no further into this matter in detail, except to say that on Tuesday week Scheu vindicated his conduct and position triumphantly : though even that was scarcely needed, as his antecedents, whatever they were, had been known to Hyndman all along, and yet he had treated him as trustworthy till the moment when he found it convenient to attack him, Scheu having done nothing fresh in the meantime to inspire any want of confidence. ❧ I will be frank with you and say that though I have called these two cases the cause of the split, I should rather have called them the cause of its *occasion :* to my mind Hyndman's tendencies have led the S. D. F. or at least were leading it into a futile and even dangerous policy, nor could I in any case have worked with him long in carrying out that policy ❧ It has meant adventure, show, and advertisement, which would have found us out in the long run, and shown us to be a small party without organization and with no very clear aims.

Hence all these theatrical boasts, and warnings about immediate violent revolution, which frighten those who are ignorant of our condition away from us, and disgust those who know how weak we are ; many of whom are just the men who would be the staunchest if occasion offered. Hence also the perpetual sneers at, and abuse of, the radicals who, deluded as we must think them, are after all the men from whom our recruits must come. Hence attacks on foreigners as foreigners, or at least sneers at them ; coquetting also with jingoism in various forms, all of which mean waiting about to see what can be made of the political situation, if perhaps at the best one may attain to a sort of Bismarckian State Socialism, or as near to it as we can get in England. I cannot stand all this ; it is not what I mean by Socialism either in aim or in means : I want a real revolution a real change in Society : Society a great organic mass of well-regulated forces used for the bringing about a happy life for all. And the means for attaining it are simple enough ; education in Socialism, and organization for the time when the crisis shall force action upon us : nothing else will do us any good at present : the revolution cannot be a mechanical one, though the last act of it may be civil war, or it will end in reaction after all.

Nothing hinders us from this education and organizing work : if there are laws against it we know nobody will dare to put them in

force : why then should we swagger about violence which we know we cannot use : when the time comes to use it we shall not need to tell everybody beforehand.

I finish by saying that whatever faults I have, I am by no means a quarrelsome man ; and if I could have avoided this quarrel I would have done so ❧ In fact I have gone on hoping against hope for the last six months that the differences might heal up : but the truth is that Hyndman is determined to be master, and will not accept any other place, and he cannot change his nature and be otherwise than a jingo and a politician even if he tries ❧ I can only hope that some of his friends may keep him straight for a while ; but I believe that in time they will be driven to the same conclusion as we have been—that they cannot work with him.

❧ As you may have heard, we have formed another body, the Socialist League, from which you will shortly hear : I can only say of it that it begins at all events with the distinct aim of making Socialists by educating them, and of organizing them to deal with politics in the end ; that it expects single-heartedness from its members and fraternal co-operation, and that it will not suffer any absolutism amongst it.

Asking you to give my kind regards to our other comrades, I am

Yours fraternally,

WILLIAM MORRIS

P. S. I had written this letter as an answer to Comrade Yewen, I think I cannot express myself very differently in any case so I ask you to accept the same statement copied out again. With thanks for your letter I am

Yours fraternally,

WILLIAM MORRIS

KELMSCOTT HOUSE
UPPER MALL, HAMMERSMITH

January 15, 1885

DEAR MR. THOMSON : Thanks for your letter : to a certain extent it is answered by your enclosure of the vote of censure : but I will just write a line or two to excuse myself to a comrade ⁂ And first I thank you for your personal kindness to me and I suppose the rest of us, and quite understand how it must have failed ; in these matters there is sure to be partizanship somewhere. I must say that the latter part of your letter in which you point out a real difference of opinion amongst the S. D. F. explains why we did not hesitate to resign when we saw how far the split had gone : I mean that quite apart from any personal differences we saw the difference of opinion which was sure to widen ⁂ Now a propagandist body cannot afford to have two parties in it, however friendly they may be personally ; they had much better work apart, otherwise we shall only have an image of the parliament with its ceaseless wrangles and no work done. Understand that I no longer fear differences of opinion in our ranks : only when the difference is established, let us separate and work side by side rather than

wrangle on together: thus we shall keep friends and the cause will be sped. Of course this does n't suit the tactics of political adventure which wants to get together a political party for immediate political ends, and they will call these views anarchical: I say they are common sense, as applied to a weak party with no means of action and with the one necessary aim of building up opinion.

I have n't time to argue the points of principle (for it amounts to that) on which I see we differ: but I hope to meet you soon and then we can discuss them frankly and without acrimony. Meantime I thank you again for taking the trouble to explain your views and for your friendliness, and wish you all success in pushing the cause: I am convinced this schism will further it rather than retard it. I am

Yours fraternally,
WILLIAM MORRIS

KELMSCOTT HOUSE
UPPER MALL, HAMMERSMITH

April 6, 1885

DEAR MR. THOMSON : Your letter only reached me this morning, too late therefore for me to write to you in time for the Conference. However in any case the answer must have been the same, as there would not have been time to lay the matter before our Council. I now write only my private and personal views on the matter. From that point I must say that I think matters had better be left where they are ; Of course I know very well that there are plenty of good and enthusiastic men in the S. D. F. to whom I wish every success. But it cannot be denied that we are on different lines, and those lines seem now to be diverging more and more ; and I think it a mistake to ignore these differences as long as they exist. As to the "personal factor," I hope, that there is nothing in it of a private nature as far as I am concerned at any rate ; but I will always resist to the utmost any attempt at warping an organization towards the satisfaction of any one man's ambition, whoever he may be ; such a man I cannot look upon as a socialist at all.

At all events it is far better that there should be two (or more) bodies of Socialists each working harmoniously internally, whatever the differences of opinion may be between the bodies, than that there should be in the bodies themselves that constant bickering & mistrust which would come of trying to keep together artificially men who have different ideas certainly about the means and perhaps about the aims of their association.

At the same time I applaud your good will and the spirit of your letter, and thank you for your kind expressions about myself ✍ As to the Embankment meeting, I do not agree with the tactics of the S. D. F. about the unemployed, nor did I when I was in that body : it seems to me that they smell of parliamentarism which I wholly dissent from ✍ I am,

Dear Mr. Thomson,

Yours faithfully,

WILLIAM MORRIS

KELMSCOTT HOUSE
UPPER MALL, HAMMERSMITH

July 23, 1885

DEAR MR. THOMSON: Many thanks for your kind enquiries, and for your information about the end of the affair. I was not damaged in any way either in clothes or body. I saw Mr. Williams and our other friends last night, and was pleased to hear that we practically carried off the victory: it was vexatious that we lost the opportunity of addressing such a multitude as were gathered about us when the ugly rush came: on the whole I fancy that the actual interruption of the said rush was merely the horse play of the rough element which I hear from other sources was rather to the fore at that time.

I don't find our friends were either dispirited or ill-tempered at the affair; but I think we ought to guard against such accidents in the future by having some organized body-guard round the speaker when we speak in doubtful places. Again with thanks, I am, Dear Mr. Thomson

Yours faithfully,
WILLIAM MORRIS

KELMSCOTT HOUSE
UPPER MALL, HAMMERSMITH

February 25, 1886

DEAR MR. THOMSON : I think you did right to pay the fine, as no principle was involved in the matter. I am sorry that I can't write you at length ; but these things take up so much of my time. So I must content myself by saying that the League always has its coat off, but that we don't quite agree with these tactics of the unemployed agitation. The whole thing smacks too much of trying to force on palliatives by parliamentary measures and we don't believe in palliatives or Parliament.

I don't mean to say that the riots will not do good ; but if they had been more successful they would have been disastrous.

Excuse great haste.

Yours very truly,
WILLIAM MORRIS

NOTES OF MORRIS LETTERS

Letter No. 1, June 20, 1884

ORRIS' correspondent, one Thomson, was a strayed American of Southern birth and Scotch antecedents who had become stranded in London and was engaged in a futile attempt to teach the obstreperous "young idea" of England how to read, write and speak English —and behave itself in school. The young idea preferred to "shoot"—wet paper pellets from surreptitious blow-guns when the teacher's back was turned ☙ Having become infected with the microbes of socialism of the milder type with a color of christianity and a theological basis of his own, he drifted within the charmed circle of Morris' personality — at lectures and discussions in obscure halls of socialist clubs or open air meetings—and being desirous of getting on to some honest manual occupation he wrote to Morris for aid, comfort or advice. He got advice.

Letter No. 2, July 24, 1884

THE London Socialists were organized in a society known as the Social Democratic Federation (the S. D. F. of these letters) — of perhaps German origin—with allied Branches in London and elsewhere, directed by a general council of which Morris and Hyndman were the leading headlights—Hyndman a kind of flashlight and Morris the more genial and all pervading sunlight.

Before allying himself with the S. D. F., Mr. Thomson being much interested in Ruskin's program, especially the feature of "national workshops" ("Unto This Last"—preface) and feeling the need of definite remedial measures broached this subject in a letter to Morris with the following result.

Letter No. 3, January 1, 1885

THE happy family of the general council of the S. D. F. had suffered a disruption, the cleavage being between Morris and Hyndman with their several sympathizers ☙ This seeming disaster falling like a bolt from the blue drew forth a note from Mr. Thomson with the following reply. It was a pretty quarrel, to which all parties may now look back without bitterness—perhaps with a degree of pathetic interest ☙ ☙

Eleanor Marx-Aveling was a daughter of Karl Marx, married to Edward Aveling. Belfort Bax, German student, expositor of Kant and writer on sociological subjects—biography of Marat, etc. Others signing with Morris not so well known were English working men.

1884—"When ten years later the two men stood side by side on the same platform, Morris generously acquitted his old colleague of all blame for the rupture." vol 2 p. 126.

1893—"Morris cordially joined in efforts to reunite the Socialist party. Joined with Hyndman and G. B. Shaw in issuing a new irenicon under the title of the 'Manifesto of English Socialists,' May 1, 1893. Vol. 2, p. 289.—Mackail's Life of Morris.

Letter No. 4, January 15, 1885

THE Morrisite defection having gone off and established a "Socialist League" of their own, there followed a "vote of censure" from the remaining body of the council of the S. D. F. This vote of censure seems to have met with some opposition from friends of Morris who remained in the S. D. F.—well meant but unavailing.

Letter No. 5, April 6, 1885

This letter appears to be in reply to a well intended effort, which failed, to reunite the two factions.

Letter No. 6, July 23, 1885

SOCIALIST lecturers in Hyde Park, on the occasion of a big political demonstration in connection with Gladstone's Home Rule policy, were mobbed in a kind of "rush" or rough-house play by the "Liberal" element there assembled. Morris was seen being hustled and bullied by the hoodlums, bracing his sturdy shoulders against the crowd and shouting "Remember you are Englishmen." John Burns, who caused the row by a too caustic and abrupt criticism of John Bright, the popular hero, was rescued by the police on the verge of the Serpentine Lake.

Mr. Williams, born orator and lecturer of the S. D. F. with British pluck, rallied the crowd and spoke successfully after the riot, standing on the ruins of his demolished rostrum.

Letter No. 7, February 25, 1886

THE fine referred to (15 shillings), after one night's imprisonment was imposed on Mr. Thomson by an English "gentleman" magistrate in court at Enfield, North London, for the offense of obstructing the Queen's Highway by lecturing (Socialistically) from the top of a dry goods box on the London street corners. The English are much given to ventilating public questions in the open air. There had been much excitement and some rioting with destruction of property by the London unemployed. "The League" mentioned was the Socialistic League founded by Morris and others upon the disruption of the Social Democratic Federation.

Mr. Thomson had taken his own head to urge the unemployed agitation at that juncture and did not have the complete endorsement of the association as Morris' letter indicates. Mr. Thomson returned to America in 1886, a sadder, if not a wiser man—and went west.

ROBERT THOMSON

September 8, 1906.

SO HERE ENDETH *WILLIAM MORRIS:* BEING A LITTLE JOURNEY BY *ELBERT HUBBARD* AND SOME LETTERS WRITTEN TO ROBERT THOMSON AS DONE INTO A BOOK BY *THE ROYCROFTERS*, AT THEIR SHOP, WHICH IS IN EAST AURORA, ERIE COUNTY, NEW YORK, JANUARY, MCMVII

Roycroft

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